

6 *The eighth generation*

The 8th generation includes Carlo Francesco (1723-1775), of the yellow-orange line, Pietro Antonio, known as Pietro «the Elder» (1729-1797), of the red line, and Miro (1746-1815), of the blue line. The first and the last of these we have already mentioned in the context of their respective branches. Pietro Antonio, the first true entrepreneur of the family, was the founder of the Pietro Gavazzi company, which remained active until 1968.

From here on, all the figures we will be dealing with belong to the red line, that of the great industrialists and bankers.

This is the most important line, partly because all the Gavazzis known today and who consider themselves part of the same family come from a single strain – the red line. The male line of the other two branches, in fact, has died out.

PIETRO ANTONIO GAVAZZI (1729-1797)

Pietro Antonio Gavazzi was the first true industrialist, starting out with courage and insight, as well as taking considerable risks, to create his industrial and commercial businesses.

It was he who embarked on the great adventure of Valmadrera, he who first set himself up after having cultivated his contacts to the fullest and seized the opportunities that presented themselves.

Pietro began the silk business as the manager of a silk mill, then moved up to rent a factory complex for himself, and finally purchased his own silk factory.

With time, he expanded the business by purchasing two other mills and initiated his sons into the business of silk manufacturing.

In the year 1767 he founded the «Pietro Gavazzi» company, thus becoming the first Gavazzi industrialist of the red line. Before him, we should remember, the above-mentioned Miro, of the blue line, owned a silk mill in Canzo.

Pietro Antonio was born in Chiavenna on July 8, 1729, to Carlo Francesco of Canzo, silk merchant, and Ludovica Schumacher of Tschappina (Switzerland), and was baptised with the name Giovanni Pietro Antonio. In the family he became known as Pietro «the Elder», to distinguish him from the famous Pietro «the Great» (1803-1874), his grandson.

The death of his parents

Pietro Antonio and his twin sister Ludovica Beatrice were born after an extremely difficult labour; their mother, in fact, died a few hours after the birth.

On April 4, 1733, when Pietro's father also died in Chiavenna, he was left an orphan at the young age of three years, and the only surviving child of the Gavazzi-Schumacher couple. The Chiavenna Tribunal placed the boy under the guardianship of the Canon and Head Apostolic Notary Don Fabio Parravicini of Chiavenna and the Canon Don Giovanni Macolino of Chiavenna, who managed his holdings until his coming of age. These consisted of all that his father had possessed at the time of his death (commercial credits, the last proceeds and savings) as well his mother's dowry (700 Austrian lire).

In the custody of uncle Filippo

The boy was subsequently given into the custody of his father's brother Filippo Gavazzi, who brought him to Canzo and raised him together with the children he had with his wife Beatrice Verza.

This uncle later managed to recover the credits of Carlo Francesco, the deceased father of Pietro, deposited with the two Canons, for a value of 216 lire, or 116 Milanese *blozeri*.

Beatrice, a good and generous woman, who had been a loving mother also to the children of her brother Carlo Giuseppe when their own mother died, took this Gavazzi nephew into her home and raised him together with her own children and her nephews and nieces, as if they were all part of the same family.

We might safely assume that, along with his cousin Miro, the son of his aunt and uncle Filippo and Beatrice (who was one day to have his own silk mill, commended for the high quality of its products and machinery) and the young Verzas, Pietro also received professional training in the Verza silk mills, which were already in operation, if only on a handicraft level. This would explain his preparation in the silk trade, which he was to keep up to date always, even during the years when he was involved in other business.

The profession of tax-collector

Filippo Gavazzi, in fact, having for some time been manager of the Canzo Tax Office, took Pietro Antonio into the business as a partner, thus initiating him into the world of public administration. From 1756 to 1759 he worked as tax collector of Canzo.

The acquaintances of the Gavazzi family included the Castelletti of Canzo, a local middle-class family, well-allied by marriage and with a good social standing. Andrea Castelletti had two daughters, Giuseppina Maria and Paola, who had made two very advantageous marriages to two brothers of the Casanova family, which came from Lodi but was originally from Magreglio and also did business in Chiavenna.

Giuseppina Maria Castelletti, who was the widow of silk mill owner Giovanni Invernizzi of Caslino, had re-married in Canzo, in 1740, to Carl'Antonio Casanova of Lodi, a rich mer-

chant; Paola had married the brother of Carl'Antonio, Pietro Antonio Casanova, in 1743.

The Casanovas of Magreglio, originally knife-sharpeners, had attained great success, like many other inhabitants of the valley, as merchants.

The two brothers lived in Lodi, an important centre of trade with Brianza and with Vallassina. Together with their father Pietro, the two had amassed considerable wealth, and silk was the main article they traded, maintaining many financial contacts with Brianza and Vallassina. The brothers eventually attained such prosperity as to be awarded the title of General Treasurers of Lodi and surroundings, putting together an extensive network of tax collectors to work for them.

It was undoubtedly through direct contacts that Pietro Antonio began working for them as a tax collector, first in Melzo (1759), then in Lodi (1760) and lastly in Ospedaletto Lodigiano (from 1761 onwards).

The division of property

On May 12, 1759, when he settled in the Lodi region, Pietro Antonio and his uncle Filippo drew up a division of the family wealth¹.

A curious fact emerges from this act of division. The notary, Longhi, drew up the deed, not in his office, but in the Gavazzi home in Canzo and, to be exact, in the pharmacy (*Apotheca* in the Latin text) on the ground floor of the same house.

From this point on the Gavazzis parted ways, destined to follow different paths in life, and the family (from which already in this period one branch had split off, that which was to become the Gavazzi Spech line) divided into two branches. From Filippo descended the Gavazzis of Canzo-Milan (blue line), who were already involved in the silk business; while from Pietro Antonio, after his period in Ospedaletto Lodigiano, descended the Gavazzis of Valmadrera-Desio-Milan.

¹ Including 17 poles and 1 *tavola* of land, one house and other pieces of land in co-ownership with their cousin, the priest Don Pietro Francesco Gavazzi. The property's value amounted to 5,000 Austrian lire.

Filippo received: half of the old Gavazzi home in the district of Sombigo, an area which was known as «Piazzola» (lay-by), one field known as «a Sigori», two small chestnut woods, all the credits of the tax office managed by his nephew, and a credit which the Verza family had towards both himself and his nephew. The total amount was 4,160 lire, from which the following had to be deducted: one debt which the company had towards Don Pietro Francesco Gavazzi (803 lire and 90 *centesimi*), one debt which the company had towards Giovanni Battista Castelletti (approximately 510 lire), and the dowry of his wife Beatrice Verza (1,800 lire). Filippo was left with 1,046 lire and 16 *centesimi*.

Pietro Antonio received: the other half of the old Gavazzi home in the district of Sombigo, a field called «a Rondanina», and all the non-specified property, loosely defined as «merchandise», which uncle and nephew held in joint possession. The total value was 1,886 lire and 12 *centesimi*, from which had to be deducted the dowry of the mother of Pietro Antonio, the deceased Ludovica Schumacher (700 lire). This left Pietro Antonio with 1186 lire and 12 *centesimi*: he therefore owed his uncle Filippo the difference of approximately 140 lire to equal his uncle's share of 1,046 lire and 16 *centesimi*. One field belonging to the Gavazzi family, known as the «field of the new wall», remained undivided between uncle and nephew, due to the fact that it was particularly fertile; they were both, in fact, to take turns profiting from its fruitfulness from time to time, over the next three years.

On October 12, 1759 Filippo paid off the debt that he and his nephew Pietro Antonio owed to his cousin, the priest Pietro Francesco. After a few months, however, on February 29, 1760, Pietro Antonio secured another loan from the same cousin for the sum of 1,500 *libras*. In the document of notary Francesco Antonio Longhi it is specified that Pietro Antonio lived in Canzo on that date, where he had returned after staying for some time at Castello di Melzo, his place of residence.

The move to the Lodi district

In Lodi there were many merchant families from Vallassina and Brianza, and a close network of contacts and relatives united them with many other fellow townsmen scattered throughout Italy and even Europe. Pietro Antonio, having moved to Lodi, was married in 1760, in the cathedral of Lodi, to Teresa Rocca (b. in 1728, d. on 27.7.1808), the daughter of Giuseppe and Anna Pastori, whose family, originally from Brianza (perhaps from Molteno, the town of the silk merchant family, Della Rocca), had recently moved to the Lodi region, where they traded, among other things, also in silk. After his marriage, Pietro Antonio Gavazzi moved to Ospedaletto Lodigiano, where the Casanovas had named him tax collector of the area and where he lived from 1761 to 1768. This was an important period in his training as a civil servant and public administrator, an experience which was in future years to prove valuable in company management, first for others and later in his own right.

In Ospedaletto his sons Carlo (1761), Mira (1766) and Giuseppe Antonio (1768) were born, as well as three other children, who all died shortly after birth. Pietro Antonio Casanova, in token of his close friendship with Pietro Antonio, was the godfather of his firstborn son, Carlo. Ospedaletto Lodigiano is still today a small and tranquil village in the countryside near Lodi, with scattered clutches of farmhouses and cottages. In the past its landscape was (and is to a large extent still today) «green and fertile», in the words of the old guidebooks, devoted to the cultivation of grain and mulberry trees. Count Odescalchi, Councillor of the Council of State, in a report made on March 29, 1775, on occasion of his fiscal inspection (and therefore when Pietro Antonio was already in Valmadrera) wrote: «This area is believed to hold approximately 1,000 souls, and these are generally all engaged in the cultivation of the lands. No other industries are evident except for 15 or 16 looms for swingling cloth, as well as such fundamental crafts as those of carpenters, blacksmiths and the like. The area is well cultivated and mulberry trees could be grown in greater quantity. Firewood is said to be scarce, and some of the landowners retain that it is very costly due to the great amounts used by the Gerolomini Fathers who live here. As there are not a large number of bees in the area, nor a great knowledge of *colsat* or other oil-producing seeds, a good deal of care and diligence is invested in order to at least experiment in the subjects». The history of this village revolves wholly around the great and powerful Abbey of the Gerolimini Fathers, which was abolished in the Napoleonic period and of which today remains the beautiful, richly-decorated church.

Here the Gavazzi family probably lived an extremely quiet and monotonous life, following the rhythm of the farmers' seasonal labour and the ritual and repetitive work of the tax collector; their only recreation consisting of the occasional trip to Lodi, where they stayed in the home of their in-laws or that of the Casanovas².

² In Ospedaletto, the Gavazzis must certainly have heard a ten year old boy singing in the choir at the monastery on Sundays, a lad gifted with an extraordinary voice, who was destined to become famous in the region. His name was Ambrogio Minoja. Years later, in fact, Minoja became a renowned voice teacher, and in 1797 he received a gold medal and 100 gold pieces from Napoleon for composing the best symphony in memory of General Lazare Hoche. When Napoleon was proclaimed King of Italy, Minoja composed a *Veni Creator* and a *Tè Deum* for the official coronation ceremony in the Duomo of Milan.

For Pietro Antonio, spinning and the silk craft must evidently have seemed an attractive alternative (and certainly more suited to his training) to the dull work of the public administrator. It is not improbable that, in his time, he considered the possibility of setting up a silk mill in the Lodi area, but he must have been dissuaded by the economic and social situation of the region. Lodi was densely populated, in fact, and industry was non-existent; labour could be found easily and at low cost, but the territory was still struggling to recover from the decline it had fallen into under Spanish rule.

The manufacturing sector was extremely limited and had little possibility for growth. The damp and foggy climate was not favourable to the cultivation of mulberry trees, although it was practised, and the only silk fabric factories were born thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of the Marquis Sommariva, who had sent to Genoa for a renowned master of the silk craft named Giuseppe Martino; Nevertheless, this had remained an isolated phenomenon. Pietro Antonio was well-aware of the fact that the situation regarding silk manufacture in the Lodi region was not particularly promising and, wisely setting his sights elsewhere, he continued to look to his native Brianza, which was becoming one of the most important centres of silk manufacture.

Return to Brianza and the silk manufacturer's profession

In spite of the fact that he lived far away, Pietro Antonio had continued to stay in close touch with his relatives in Canzo (naming his children after Filippo, Beatrice and Miro, respectively the uncle and aunt who had raised him as their own son, and his cousin-brother, a silk mill owner in Canzo), whose relatives, in turn, were all in the silk trade as well.



The Bovara spinning mill at Parè, seen from the south.



He did not hesitate, therefore, when he received an offer from the Bovara family of Parè – a small village near Valmadrera (of which it is now a hamlet) – to take over the operation of their old silk mill³.

Pietro Antonio had a very long-standing friendship with the Bovaras⁴.

The Bovara family, who knew Pietro Antonio well, had no doubt as to his capacities, that he was the right man at the right time, and that he would succeed in maintaining the high level of their company, in the 18th Century reputed to be the most respected in the Lecco



Panorama of Parè in a period postcard (top).

The Bovara family manor in Parè (above).

area. Likewise, for Pietro Antonio, the Bovara's offer arrived at precisely the right moment.

It was probably in 1769 that Pietro Antonio moved with his family to Parè, where they lived in a house belonging to the Bovara family. In 1770, in Parè, Pietro Antonio and his wife, Teresa Rocca, had a daughter, Anna Maria, and in 1774 a son named Pietro, who died after a few months.

Pietro Antonio worked as a manager with the Bovaras until 1772, and after only three years of «training», felt ready to branch out into his own silk business.

On October 10, 1772 he took out a three-year lease on a silk mill belonging to Giacinto Carozzi in Valmadrera, and immediately launched out into a successful silk business⁵.

In 1796, with the wealth acquired from his initial success, Pietro Antonio took another lease from Giuseppa Butti of Valmadrera, this time for nine years, on a second silk mill (called,

³ The Bovara family was one of the oldest and most important among the silk manufacturers in the Lecco area. Giuseppe Bovara originally came from Malgrate, moving to Lecco in the second half of the 17th Century, where he set up a small silk mill with a few basins, which represented the first manufacturing establishment of what was to become one of the most important silk complexes of the Lecco region. In the mid-1700s the Bovara family owned a three-operational (throwing, spinning and weaving) silk mill in Parè, one in Castello and one in Lecco, and a silk mill with 35 burners in Malgrate.

The Parè complex was the first example of an industrial centre of its kind, on which later silk factories of the area were to be modelled. Most of the Lecco mills, in fact, were not built as single structures, but were usually composed of two or more buildings dedicated to other functions (dormitories, private chapel, etc.) which, in the typical layout, were situated between the family residence and the industrial structure. In the second half of the 1700s, the Bovaras were already attempting to introduce the complete raw silk processing cycle in their mills. They already owned mills and spinning factories equipped with winders, in fact, while the rest of the silk manufacturers remained limited, for the whole of the 1700s and the first decades of the 1800s, to production model based on handicraft methods.

In 1773, there were already 15 male and 20 female workers in the factory of Parè, while the number of labourers and employees in the other silk mills of the same period was much smaller. The silk-winders working outside the factory, moreover, can be estimated at a few thousand.

The silk industry of Parè was operated until 1930.

⁴ The brothers Giacomo and Giuseppe Bovara had married Maria Orsola and Caterina Crana of Chiavenna, the sisters of Guglielmo Crana, a merchant from Omegna living in Chiavenna, who had been a friend of Carlo Francesco Gavazzi, father of Pietro Antonio. Crana had also been the godfather of Ludovica Beatrice Gavazzi, Pietro Antonio's twin sister.

Above all, however, the Bovaras were close relatives of his aunt, Beatrice Gavazzi Verza. One of Beatrice's nephews, Carlo, with whom Pietro Antonio had grown up as a brother in the home of his aunt and uncle, had married Marina Bovara.

⁵ The mill, previously owned by Bartolomeo Dell'Oro, was situated on the premises of the aristocratic Carozzi residence. The annual rent was 91 lire and 5 *soldi* (the same amount that dell'Oro paid as rent to Carozzi after having sold him the mill), later lowered to 90 lire.



The Bovara complex in Parè.

simply enough, «the Mill»). This factory, according to the lease (which is kept in the Gavazzi Archive of Valmadrera) consisted of «2 floors divided into 6 spaces and 2 machines for each space with 20 reels and *bacette* per machine, 14 of which are for spinning and 10 for throwing, all supplied both with firewood for burning and ironware with spindles, «*rocchetti*» and «*campanelli*» and 2 «*rocelle*» for each spindle with its scale, for a total of 1,350 lire per year, payable in two instalments»⁶.

At the end of the lease, in accordance with an option included by Pietro Antonio in the contract (clearly fruit of the training he had received in the past as a public administrator) the spinning mill became the property of the Gavazzi family.

The rent was extremely low, and as consideration Gavazzi had to pay off the debts of Mr. Butti – «as security for the said outlays the spinning mill and annexes will remain entirely mortgaged in favour of Mr. Gavazzi with the express condition that Mr. Butti and family can sell the spinning mill to no one other than Mr. Gavazzi and family, declaring that upon



Central body of the Bovara spinning mill at Castello.

⁶ Giuseppa Butti, son of the late Francesco Butti, lived in Mantova and on October 13, 1791 had leased the mill to Domenico Butti by legal contract. This deed contains an interesting description of the building. «On the ground floor is a spinning factory with 9 large windows, coppered and complete with shutters; at the side is a porch leading to a storage room fitted with shelves». The building extended length-wise in the direction of the road; underneath the above-mentioned shelves was a cupboard used for winding and containing 6 openings with 12 doors, completely lined with wood. In addition, 1 worn chest, 2 mallets, 2 brass canes for drawing the weaves, 1 burner with feet, 2 boxes, 1 test tube for the silk with small reel or *biconcino*, 1 long bench of walnut wood, 1 large iron *livera* for spinning.

On the main floor, up a flight of stone steps, were 4 rooms of different sizes, depending on their use (each with a door with a chain and an outer door) and a kitchen with a fireplace and stone hearth, a washbasin of hewn stone and burners for cooking with boards for protection and a board above.

The same stone staircase led to the second floor, where there were 3 other rooms, and the third floor, where there was a large loft under the roof with 4 disassembled windows.

Annexed to the spinning mill was a garden to the south and the west, enclosed by about thirty fruit trees, a pergola of white September grapes and several strawberry bushes. A side road bordered by hewn stone walls lead towards the sluice gate from where water was directed to the mill, and led right by the mill itself, where the tools, lock and key of the said sluice gate were kept, and continued on to the mill trough in hewn stone, worn smooth by the running water. At the end of this channel was another small sluice gate in wood which led into the mill, for increasing or decreasing the flow of water to the wheel, according to need, for the greater convenience of the regulator.

To the east and the north was grassland with many mulberry trees, enclosed by a wall on two sides and on the other two protected by the major and the minor irrigation ditches of the mill».



Parè di Valmadrera: main doors of the Bovara industrial complex.

execution of the said outlays the agreement was to be fulfilled in favour of the latter».

When the lease of the mill actually did expire, the owner had not managed to pay off all his debts (including 8,000 lire plus interest for money he had borrowed from the Verri Counts in 1778, as well as other large sums to various creditors), and so the spinning mill entered into the possession of Giuseppe Antonio, son of Pietro Antonio, who in the meantime had passed away in Valmadrera on October 28, 1797.

In 1797, Pietro Antonio and sons took out a lease in Valmadrera, from Father Giovanni Carlo Caldara, Prior of the Monastery and Hospital Fatebenefratelli (who in the 1700s was the largest property-owner of Valmadrera, thanks to an inheritance from a benefactor, Count Giacomo Mandelli), on a silk mill with ten basins.

Thus it was that Pietro Antonio, in just a few years from the mid-1770s to shortly before the 18th Century, came into possession of his own silk mill in Valmadrera, with fifty or so basins, as well as another silk mill and a spinning mill. This was quite an accomplishment if we consider the limited resources, especially financial, with which he had begun.

The Pietro Gavazzi Company

Thus was founded the Pietro Gavazzi Company, which was to become so famous and enjoy such great prosperity under the direction of his son Giuseppe Antonio and his grandson, the second Pietro Gavazzi (1803–1874), and which lasted for almost two centuries⁷.

A chart of this company, from the 1900 Universal Exhibition of Paris, makes mention of its founding, in 1767. It is likely that the date of the founding of the company refers to the industry of Giacinto Carozzi (or that of Giuseppa Butti or the Prior of Fatebenefratelli), which was later, as we have seen, bought by Pietro⁸.

The Pietro Gavazzi Company, which was transformed into a limited partnership in 1844 by Pietro (1803–1875), after his death was managed by his sons Carlo (1832–1878) and Giuseppe (1831–1913). The Pietro Gavazzi Company continued to expand in the branch of silk spinning, and in the year 1900 owned 12 factories for extraction and throwing (keeping in mind, however, that the manufacturing units dedicated to extraction were subject to frequent variations), and employed 5,000 workers.

⁷ The company continued to expand, employing increasing numbers of women, and also men, until the great depression of 1930–1933; after this, it managed a partial resurgence by diversifying into synthetic fibres as well as silk processing.

⁸ The list of the industrial establishments in Valmadrera on January 9, 1886, sent by Mayor Carlo Viganò to the Assistant Prefect of Lecco, reveals the following information:

Company	Process	N. of employees		N. of child workers	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
Gavazzi Pietro (Molino Inferiore)	extraction	76	264	16	37
Gavazzi Pietro (Borgata)	extraction	12	220	16	90
Gavazzi Pietro (Paré)	throwing	22	50	8	17
	Totals	110	534	40	144

In 1918 this limited partnership was transformed into a joint-stock company with a capital of 3.6 million, and the son of Giuseppe, Lodovico (1857-1941), was named president, a position he held until his death. In actual fact Lodovico, while running the family business, cultivated simultaneous interests in banking and, as we shall see, politics.

The 20th Century brought a great depression in the silk manufacturing sector⁹. After the First World War, the Pietro Gavazzi Company, like the Egidio & Pio Gavazzi (another family

Of particular interest also is the chart relating to the Pietro Gavazzi Company at the 1900 Universal Exhibition of Paris:

PIETRO GAVAZZI (Milano - via Cusani 14)
Company founded in 1767 - 5,000 workers - not admissible

SILK MILLS		MILLS, THROWING AND EXTRACTION PLANTS	
Albese	Province of Como	Bellano	Province of Como
Bellano	Province of Como	Cernusco sul Naviglio	Province of Milano
Cernusco sul Naviglio	Province of Milano	Desio	Province of Milano
Desio	Province of Milano	Oro	Province of Como
Desio	Province of Milano	Paré al Lago	Province of Como
Malgrate	Province of Como	Passirana	Province of Milano
Molino	Province of Como	Valmadrera	Province of Como
Valmadrera	Province of Como	Vendrognò	Province of Como
Sernaglia	Province of Treviso		

Branches

Ballabio - Bovisio - Casargo - Cernusco Lombardone - Gorgonzola - Introbio - Limbiate - Morchiuso - Paderno Milanese - Perledo - Seregno - Varenna - Vignate.

The following table, meanwhile, contains examples of wages at the Valmadrera factory in the early 1900s:

Salaries in the silk throwing and extraction mills owned by the Pietro Gavazzi company in Valmadrera, in the province of Como

Years	Extracters	Mezzanti (???)		Controllers	Incannatrici (???)				Binatrici(???)	Extracters of the thread	of the yarn
		Girls over age 12			Girls over age 12		Girls under age 12				
		Maximum	Minimum		Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum			
1901-1905	1,10	1,10	0,90	0,75	0,80	0,50	0,50	0,35	1,30	2,10	2,60
1906	1,10	1,00	0,90	0,75	0,80	0,50	0,50	0,35	1,30	2,25	2,60
1907	1,25	1,10	1,00	0,85	1,00	0,60	0,70	0,50	1,40	2,75	3,25

⁹ A study of the results of the Pietro Gavazzi Company balance sheets from 1919 to 1945 reveals a downward trend from 1927 onwards, amounting to seven years of serious losses, three in which the net profits were at a minimum and a maximum profit, in 1937, amounting to a little over a quarter of that of the financial year 1919-1920.

Capital, profits or losses by year, of the S.A. Pietro Gavazzi (1919-1945)

Year	Capital	Profit or loss	Year	Capital	Profit or loss
1919-20	3.600.000	2.065.981	1932	8.000.000	-343.144
1920-21	5.000.000	-926.534	1933	6.000.000	-347.797
1921-22	5.000.000	1.057.044	1934	6.000.000	337.471
1922	10.000.000	804.189	1935	6.000.000	453.317
1923	10.000.000	891.663	1936	6.000.000	446.046
1924	10.000.000	896.314	1937	6.000.000	550.933
1925	10.000.000	739.076	1938	6.000.000	66.803
1926	10.000.000	484.061	1939	6.000.000	86.357
1927	10.000.000	-819.511	1940	6.000.000	99.668
1928	10.000.000	277.761	1942	6.000.000	474.824
1929	10.000.000	-450.955	1943	6.000.000	453.519
1930	10.000.000	353.284	1944	6.000.000	-68.018
1931	10.000.000	-106.954	1945	6.000.000	-1.296.588

company), went through a difficult period, made worse by the fact that, being a company that manufactured only yarn, it became extremely difficult to procure nationally-produced raw materials.

It is also to be considered that very quickly in the course of the 1900s the so-called silk manufacturing companies were to stop dealing exclusively in pure silk and begin using largely man-made fibres, as the Pietro Gavazzi company declared in 1923: «We have adapted our company to the throwing and making up of special artificial silk yarn». In actual fact, this «adaptation», which was obviously not common to the Gavazzis alone, marked in a certain sense a turning-point in history (similar to that which occurred several years earlier, when the importation of raw silk and silk cocoons from abroad began to gain momentum), inasmuch as a split began to take place in the old, traditional bond between Italian agriculture (mulberry tree cultivation, silkworm raising and cocoon production) and the manufacturing business – a bond which had been at the heart of both the success and the weakness of the sector. Unfortunately, this modernisation came too late, at a time when the comparative advantages of a national silk industry were steadily disappearing.

While the new production did not prevent a series of years in the red during the 1930s, it was accompanied by an expansion of the factories – between 1931 and 1939 spindles were increased from 40,000 to 50,000. In the second post-war period, however, when the sons of Lodovico, Emanuele (1885-1950) and Pio (1888-1970) were in charge, the company fell into a great decline¹⁰ (except for the second half of the 1950s), with seven straight years of losses between 1961 and 1968, and concluded with the inevitable closing down of the oldest of the Gavazzi businesses.

Other occupations

One more curious fact is worthy of mention – in the property registers of the Milan State Archives¹¹, of the list of the commercial transaction in Valmadrera, it appears that from 1773 to 1784, Pietro Antonio integrated his already abundant proceeds from the silk industry with a «*bottegaro* and *pastaro*» (shopkeeper and baker) business, of which he was nominally the owner, but which was probably actually run by a trusted associate. Pietro Antonio also set up an extremely profitable cocoon trade.

¹⁰ In 1946 the silk manufacturing company Pietro Gavazzi formulated this interesting (and somewhat prophetic) analysis: «the market for our products is still today limited by the counter-measures taken by importing countries and by the tendency to complete the manufacturing cycles of populations normally dedicated to agriculture and the production of raw materials. This phenomenon was caused firstly by our own policy, which has provoked retaliatory measures on the part of other nations, and secondly by the war, which has forced such countries to concentrate on achieving self-sufficiency. The markets (Argentina, Brasil, Mexico) that were great importers of our rayon twine before the war, now seem to me to have become completely self-sufficient. Some of these (such as Brazil) have, in fact, become our rivals» (from Ivano Granata and Giuseppe M. Longoni (eds.) *L'armonia di produttori. Impresa, sindacato e amministrazione a Monza(1893-1963)*, Ediesse, Rome, 1994).

¹¹ Antiquity section, file no. 2151.